

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A sputter coated article is provided with improved mechanical durability (e.g., pre-HT scratch resistance) and/or thermal stability by sputtering at least one Ag inclusive layer in an atmosphere including at least O₂ gas. For instance, in certain example embodiments an Ag inclusive target may be sputtered in an atmosphere including a combination of Ar and O₂ gas. In certain embodiments, this enables the resulting AgO_x infrared (IR) reflecting layer to better adhere to adjacent contact layer(s).